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Church flourishing on challenging field

By Tony Martin
Associate Editor

Mississippi is typically considered the buckle of the Bible Belt. Yet there are some communities in the state which are barely churchied, in which the prospect of growth seems unlikely at best.

New Life Church in Nicholson has defied both those odds and exceeded expectations. In a community of 5,000, with only five percent of the population claiming any church affiliation, New Life has reached people that conventional wisdom would consider unreachable.

Chalk it up to a visionary association, a devoted pastor, and resources provided by both the association and the Church Planting Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, as funded by the Margaret Lackey State Missions Offering.

Pastor Rusty Kuhn came to pastor New Life by a circuitous route. "I was an Air Force kid," Kuhn said, "and grew up with an alcoholic dad. I was an alcoholic, and a drug addict. I was saved when I was 21 — I was at the very bottom — and Jesus took all that away. God put a call on my life, and I spent the next two years supply preaching."

Kuhn has pastored in Mississippi since 1999. He had pastored Hepzibah Church in Lawrence County for two-and-a-half years, and Bethel Church in the Pearl River Association prior to coming to New Life.

Nicholson has seen a spike in growth since Hurricane Katrina struck in late August 2005. Many of its new residents are from Chalmette, La., and St. Bernard Parish; others are from Mississippi coastal areas such as Gulfport and Bay St. Louis. "We're a little higher than a lot of the areas around here," Kuhn said, "so the damage from Katrina wasn't as bad as it was in other places."

"There are 500 new homes in one subdivision," Kuhn said, "200 in another, and there are plans for another 1200 in a new subdivision."

While these are middle-class homes for the most part, Nicholson is a poor community, riddled with drug and

alcohol activity. "I can take you to a



ICE CREAM, ANYONE? — A group from New Life Church, Nicholson, distributes ice cream cones from a generator-operated freezer to kids and adults in neighborhoods in Nicholson. (Special to the Baptist Record).

drug dealer's house a half mile in that direction," Kuhn said, pointing, "and a half mile in the other direction is another. I'm really burdened for folks in that condition."

Kuhn and his wife prayed about the possibility of taking the pastorate of what would be a new work for two weeks. "My wife had the same burden," Kuhn said. "So everything just fell in place for us." The church officially launched on Easter Sunday 2006.

"We started with a core of 12 people that Carl Myers had put together from around the area," said Kuhn. "We just all clicked at that first meeting. A couple had been raised in this community. Our strategy was to be a church that was not about the building, but a church without walls. We went out into subdivisions and trailer parks and surveyed people. We set up a tent with chairs and simply went door to door, announcing that we were going to have church in the tent. We had things for kids — balloon animals, face painting, things like that."

"What we found was that people wouldn't necessarily come to the tent, but they would sit on their porches and listen," Kuhn continued. "We also did a lot of servant evangelism. For instance, we put an ice cream freezer on the back of a trailer and would give out ice cream cones all over Nicholson. We might do 250 or 300 cones at a time. It gave us an opportunity to talk about the Lord, to give out Gospel tracts, and so forth. We became known as the 'Ice Cream Church.' We'd also give full service to people at gas stations, wash windshields, things like that."

Kuhn noted that there just wasn't a lot of respect for churches in the community. "We are the only church in town that isn't the product of, or been part of, a split," he said. "So many of the new people in town claim to be Catholic, but in name only — they come from Catholic families. What

has helped us as much as anything has been the disaster relief work the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board has done. People know us by that, and it has opened up a lot of doors to us."

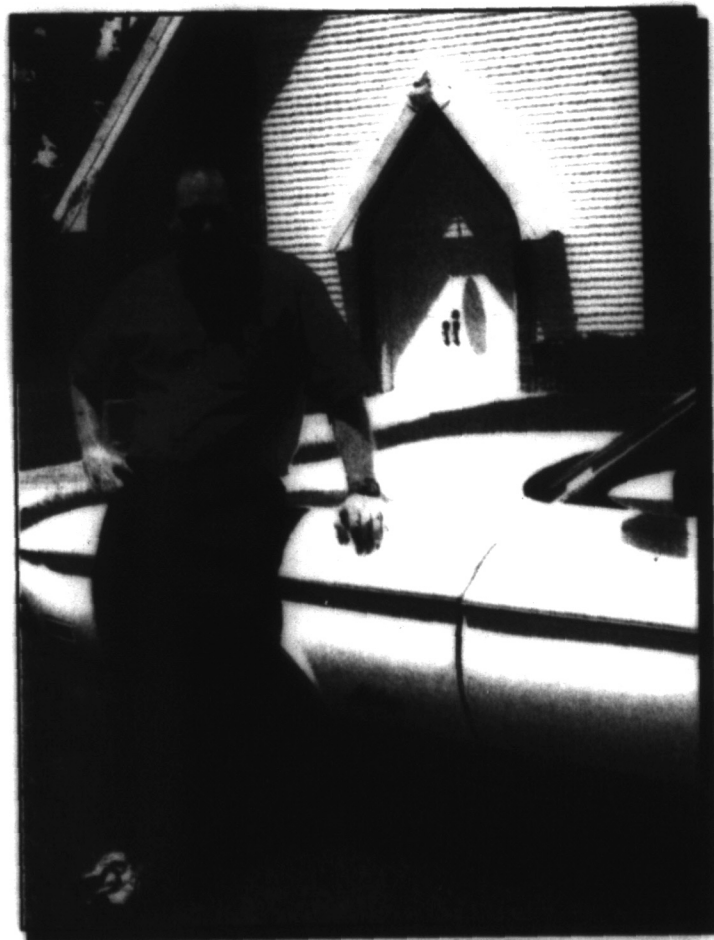
In keeping with the "church without walls" strategy, Kuhn and the church divided Nicholson into 12 areas, and have placed cell groups — home groups — in each area. The church has attempted to place one of these small groups in each community and each trailer park in Nicholson. Each home is equipped to be a lighthouse or outreach to its area. The church currently has eight groups active, with two more ready to start. Each group has at least one teacher and one other leader.

"We don't have traditional Sunday School," said Kuhn. "We're not about what goes on within the walls of the building."

The church holds worship services each Sunday morning. "When we leave worship each Sunday, I ask, 'What time is it?' and the church responds, 'It's time to be the church.' When they leave this place, that's the time to be the church. The building is a tool, but that's it."

"Without the support from the Margaret Lackey Missions Offering, we couldn't do what we're doing," Kuhn stated. "We're in the second year of a three-year partnership with the Church Planting Department, but we hope to be self-sustaining ahead of schedule."

"Rusty and the church are reaching hard-to-reach, unchurched people who have no Christian background," said Ed Deuschle, director of the Church Planting Department at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. "He is discipling them and giving them a hands-on missions experience — and they're already talking in terms of doing a church plant themselves."



Kuhn



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Our remarkable Mississippi Baptist garden

In Mississippi Baptist life, as in Christianity as a whole, we are the benefactors of the sacrificial actions and efforts of the spiritual giants who preceded us. They planted this remarkable Baptist garden in which we live, then others watered it, and we live in the blessings of their faithfulness every day.

One of those spiritual giants, among the many Mississippi Baptists have produced, is Margaret McKae Lackey. She was born in 1858 in Copiah County, the fifth of nine children born to James and Elizabeth Lackey. She grew up doing what most girls in Mississippi did in that era. She played games with her friends, went to school, did her chores at home, and attended church.

Margaret Lackey went on to attend Hillman College in Clinton, which we now know as Mississippi College, one of our three Baptist-affiliated institutions of higher learning in the state. She studied to be a teacher and indeed taught for many years in Mississippi schools.

Raised in the Baptist tradition of the day, Lackey — who never married — had a deep love for missions whose goal it was (and is) to spread the Gospel message of Jesus Christ to people who had never heard of the Savior. She used her teaching skills to help the children in her church learn to share her love of missions.

She also utilized her talent as a gifted poet and writer to help Christians understand the importance of missions. She was the author of several studies on missions.

In 1912, Margaret Lackey became the first paid leader of the Mississippi Woman's



Margaret McKae Lackey

Missionary Union (wMu). Her passion for missions was obvious to all who met her. She once wrote, "Sisters, we have done passing well this year, but, oh, the untouched multitudes of women and children in Mississippi whose souls are crying silently yet know not for what they are crying."

After a storied career, Margaret Lackey retired in 1930 from her position as corresponding secretary of Mississippi wMu. Many more Mississippi Baptist women, inspired by her model life, have been raised up by the Lord for Kingdom service since then.

In 1903, Margaret Lackey was among those who led Mississippi wMu to begin a

special annual observance to emphasize the importance of state missions. That special observance eventually turned into the Season of Prayer for State Missions.

In 1935, the offering taken during the Season of Prayer for State Missions was named in honor of the woman who today remains one of Mississippi Baptists' most outstanding leaders: the Margaret Lackey State Missions Offering.

Margaret McKae Lackey died in 1948 just a few days short of her 90th birthday, having during a most memorable time in Mississippi and American history. As a child, she witnessed the Civil War and the privations of Reconstruction. As an adult, she lived through World War I, the Great Depression, and World War II. No doubt, her life experiences convinced her of the importance of bringing everyone she could to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

The first state mission offering in 1903 received a total of \$294.38. The 2007 goal for the Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering is \$2.2 million. Miss Lackey would be pleased to know that the work in which she so earnestly believed has been carried on in her name for these many years.

Today the Margaret Lackey State Missions Offering encompasses a multitude of important state programs, such as Christian camping, church planting, disaster relief, literacy, and volunteer missionary assistance. Gifts to the offering make possible many of the Mississippi Baptist programs that exist today.

Now it's our turn to tend to the garden. May we be found faithful in this and all endeavors we undertake in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and in remembrance of spiritual giants like Margaret Lackey.

Homosexual group applauds 'great strides'

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — A new study by a pro-homosexual group reveals that when it comes to homosexual characters and themes on primetime television, ABC and the CW lead the pack — although all five major broadcast networks have enough such programming to cause Christian families concern.

The study of one year's worth of programming found that 15% of all of ABC's primetime programming hours during that span contained either homosexual characters or the discussion of homosexuality. The CW was second at 12%, followed by CBS at nine %, NBC at seven %, and Fox at six %.

The first-of-its-kind study was conducted by the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD). The organization also gave the networks grades: ABC was rated "good," the CW, CBS, and NBC "fair," and Fox "poor." No network received the highest grade of "excellent." The study, dubbed the Network Responsibility Index, examined programming between June 1, 2006 and May 31, 2007.

"While we have made great strides in the ten years since Ellen DeGeneres came out on television, this report shows where work still needs to be done and which networks are

failing to represent millions of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender viewers," GLAAD President Neil G. Giuliano said in a statement.

Television, the study noted, has the power of persuasion. "We know that seeing multidimensional LGBT people on television changes public perceptions... The power of the broadcast medium to shape culture and collective consciousness is indisputable."

The study found homosexual characters and themes on a wide range of programming. Following are some examples:

- ABC led the way with two shows: the drama Brothers & Sisters, which included a homosexual son, and the comedy Ugly Betty, which had at least two homosexual characters, including a transgender one.

Desperate Housewives also has two homosexual characters. GLAAD noted that the creators and/or showrunners of the three programs all are openly homosexual. A fourth program, Grey's Anatomy, features a homosexual bartender. Men in Trees featured homosexual characters in individual episodes.

- The CW's second-place showing was due primarily to

the reality program America's Next Top Model, which has two homosexual personalities and showcases lesbian or bisexual contestants. Individual episodes of Veronica Mars, All of Us, and Hidden Palms had homosexual characters.

- CBS finished third in the study based mainly on its reality programming, five of which included homosexual contestants. Those shows were Big Brother All Stars, Rockstar: Supernova, Survivor: Cook Islands, Amazing Race 10, and Amazing Race: All Stars.

The sitcom, The Class, had a leading homosexual character. Three comedies had homosexual characters in individual episodes: How I Met Your Mother, Two and a Half Men, and The New Adventures of Old Christine.

Even crime dramas such as CSI, CSI NY, The Unit, Without a Trace, and Cold Case had homosexual themes or characters in individual episodes, with Cold Case featuring a kiss between two men.

- NBC has three programs with recurring homosexual characters: The Office, Friday Night Lights, and ER. Reality shows or programming with homosexual characters, contestants, or themes in individ-

ual shows were Heroes, 30 Rock, Las Vegas, The Apprentice, Last Comic Standing, and Law & Order.

- Fox finished last, although three of the programs on the list are animated comedies that appeal to younger audiences: American Dad, Family Guy, and The Simpsons. All three have recurring characters, with The Simpsons showcasing two such characters: Marge's sister Patty and Waylon Smithers.

Programs with homosexual contestants, characters and/or themes in individual episodes were House, Bones, The Wedding Bells, Trading Spaces: Meet Your New Mommy, and Celebrity Duets.

GLAAD noted that ABC helped lead the way in the 1990s in homosexual programming with Ellen, when the lead character announced her lesbianism.

"This historic event not only shaped the future of LGBT representation on ABC, but on all of television," the study said.

Each year GLAAD also releases a preview of the upcoming television seasons and examines what programs have homosexual characters. The preview will be released in early September.

Lebanon still cleaning up from ruinous war



APPEAL FOR DOCTOR — The rickety, wooden planks of a clinic in southern Lebanon act as support for men who are painting the walls. It was here that many people were treated for injuries after the 34-day war with Israel last year. Today, the clinic is open intermittently because there is no local doctor. Baptist relief workers have been asked to supply a doctor since there is no other hospital or clinic nearby. (BPphoto)

SOUTHERN LEBANON (BP) — Ruined buildings, their walls peppered by bullets and shrapnel, still mark Lebanon's landscape a year after the 34-day conflict with Israel ended. Where homes and schools once stood, empty lots remain.

On the surface, it doesn't appear much different from last summer when Baptist relief workers came to provide medical care for the injured and distribute blankets, heaters, water, food, and Bibles to those who had been caught in the crossfire.

Rami (not his real name), a local believer, remembers that time. He was one of the Lebanese Christians who worked alongside the American volunteers. He was afraid of identifying himself as a Christian in this predominantly Muslim area.

He remembers sitting in a van, afraid to get out, afraid he would jeopardize the safety of his family if he did. He also remembers that the hardest step to take was the first one.

When Baptist workers "asked me to go with them to pass out things, I hesitated a little bit," he recalled. He feared for the safety of his family. "I didn't want to be seen going into houses or clinics [but then] I saw these doctors coming from America," he said. "They left their houses and everything they had to come here, and I'm this close and I didn't even want to get out of the van."

Rami prayed that God would give him the courage and faith to help the people who were in need of so much, including most importantly the Savior.

Rami accompanied the Baptist physicians into villages where they were the first ones who had come to help. This was the first time he had seen people with that much love. He saw people kiss the hands of the doctors.

"It was a beautiful thing they were doing," he said of the doctors. He also found it wasn't just the villages they helped.

"Not only were they a huge help to the people, but for us [Christians]," he recalled.

An Islamic leader in one of the villages noticed this love, too. He was curious why these strangers from another country would help people they didn't know. He asked Rami why they were doing this.

Rami simply replied, "Because the Messiah taught us this. I learned it in the Bible."

An uncommon bond formed between the two men. Over the time Rami and the volunteers

worked in the Muslim village, the men became friends.

Months later, a horn caught Rami's attention as he walked down a road near his home. The car stopped and a man emerged; it was his friend, the Islamic leader.

"He came to me and said, 'Even if you aren't working in our village anymore, you need to come back and visit us,'" Rami recounted.

"This may have been the only chance we would get to hand out Bibles," Rami later said.

"[Offering] tuna is one thing, a heater is one thing," said Rami, "but a Bible is the most important thing."

"If there hadn't been a war, there wouldn't have been a chance to take these things along with the Word of God to them," Rami continued.

"This is the beginning of the real work."

FBC Dallas calls Jeffress

DALLAS (BP) — The pastoral search committee for First Church in Dallas on Aug. 5 recommended the congregation's next pastor be Robert Jeffress, current pastor of First Baptist Church in Wichita Falls, Texas. The committee looked at more than 100 individuals before settling on Jeffress, according to a news release from FBC Dallas. The church is looking for a replacement for Mac Brunson, who left to become pastor of First in Jacksonville, Fla., in February 2006. Jeffress served as pastor of First Church in Eastland, Texas, from 1985-92. He earned a bachelor's degree from Baylor University, a master's from Dallas Theological Seminary, and a doctorate from Southwestern Seminary in Ft. Worth. He is the author of several books, including *The Solomon Secrets*, *Hell? Yes!*, *The Divine Defense*, *Grace Gone Wild!* and *Second Chance, Second Act*. He and his wife Amy have two daughters. First Church, Dallas, has been home to several well-known preachers during its history, including George W. Truett and W.A. Criswell.

Looking back

10 years ago

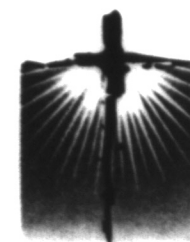
Veteran worship leader Mark Tullos tells a group of 100 pastors, music ministers, and other worship leaders, "The most important ingredient in worship preparation is prayer," at a Worship Conference at the Baptist Building in Jackson.

20 years ago

Eight Lawrence County men under the leadership of William J. Nelson, associational mission development director, fly to Schurz, Nev., to help construct a new church building for Walker River Church. Walker River members are Paiute Indians, who hosted the workers.

50 years ago

William P. Davis, pastor of Flora Church, accepts the position of secretary in the Department of Negro Work for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

**THE SECOND
FRONT PAGE**

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A WOMAN WHO MADE A DIFFERENCE

This is not a political article focused on Hillary Clinton, Nancy Pelosi, or Sandra Day O'Connor, though no doubt each of them has a place in history. Neither is this a biblical sermonic article extolling the virtues of women in the Bible who made a difference like Queen Esther, Ruth, Naomi, Mary, or the sisters Mary and Martha. Each of them and many more from Scripture would be a worthy subject and are praiseworthy for their leadership, their influence, and their walk with God. The woman in the spotlight for this article is a lady who loved the Lord and lived with a passion for telling all those around her — and people to the ends of the earth — of God's great saving love. She spent her days, her energy, and her resources helping to spread the Good News of Jesus' saving power and making a difference for the Kingdom of God. Her name was Margaret Lackey, the first recording secretary of Woman's Missionary Union in Mississippi.

While there are not many people still living who knew

her, it may be that her influence is greater now than when she was living. She made a difference in her lifetime and raised mission awareness and mission involvement to new heights. Now the faithful giving of God's people through the Margaret Lackey State Missions Offering makes a difference in mobilizing believers and reaching unbelievers in ways that are beyond calculation. Our concern and support merges with hers to magnify the love of Jesus. Because of your faithful support both financially and prayerfully, Margaret Lackey continues to make a huge difference. While statistics do not tell the whole story, they certainly provide small windows through which we can view the large impact that is being made.

This past year, gifts through the Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering enabled us to be a part of 12 new church starts and provide continuing support for 20 more. Because of this offering, many people who most of us never see, who are confined behind walls and bars of prisons, came to know Jesus. We saw the first graduates receive their diplomas from the New Orleans Seminary Extension Center at Parchman State Penitentiary. These men, many of whom will never see outside the prison walls, have become trained and meaningful servants of our Lord inside those walls.

Margaret Lackey is a state missions offering with a global vision. This past year, over 3,000 Mississippi Baptists were helped and encouraged to participate in

life-changing worldwide mission projects in 50 nations. Margaret Lackey is making a difference. Sometime when you are wondering what difference your life is making, what difference your gifts, your prayers, or your witness is making, I would remind you to remember one woman who walked among Mississippi Baptists whose life made a difference in her world then and in our world now. Beyond anything she could have ever imagined, her influence continues to make a difference — but even more exciting is that we can put together our energies, interest, and desires to glorify Jesus, and we can make a difference.

The statewide goal this year is \$2.2 million. While that is a worthy goal, the Kingdom work could be enlarged in significant ways if all of our churches would participate. Each year about one-half of our churches carry the load while all of our churches share in the blessings.

Pray — Give — Make a Difference!

The author may be contacted at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. E-mail: jfutral@mbcb.org.



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board



**YOU CAN RESPOND
RIGHT NOW!**

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

So. Baptists called to pray for Korean captives

SILVER SPRINGS, Md. (BP) — Korean Baptist leaders across America gave extra time Sunday to pray for South Korean Christians still held hostage by Taliban militants in Afghanistan.

Korean Baptists are praying for safety and God's comfort for the hostages, said Tae Hwan Park, who until June was executive director of the Korean Council of Southern Baptist Churches in America. The hostages were on a trip sponsored by Sammul Presbyterian church near Seoul. Two of the men have been killed, and their captors recently released two women with health problems.

"We need to pray that God will be the solution," Park said. "We ask all Southern Baptists to continue faithful in prayer for these Koreans in Afghanistan."

David Ro, president of the Korean Council of Southern Baptist Churches in America and pastor of River Dell Korean Baptist Church in River Edge, N.J., thanked Southern Baptists for their prayers.

"I have been so sad," Ro said. "Whenever I am reminded of their faces in the TV monitor, which [the] Taliban provided, I cannot stop shedding tears

and praying to God to take them back to the Sam Mul church and to Korea. At this moment we need to pray to God that the Holy Spirit move [the] Taliban's heart and prescribe peaceful ways."

Other Southern Baptist leaders, including Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) President Frank Page, expressed the need for fervent prayer.

"I call on all Southern Baptists to join in earnest prayer for the release of these mission workers," Page said. "We all know that there is risk in speaking for the Lord. We are all aware that there is risk when one travels in foreign countries. Though they went against their government's advice in traveling to Afghanistan, I know they went with a sense of calling from the Lord."

"While the two who have already been martyred are now enjoying the presence of the Lord, we do pray for the release and safe return of the others so that they will not have to suffer and that their work of sharing Christ can go on. Yes, we trust the Lord in this situation. However, as God has given us the privilege of prayer, let us pray that these hostages would be released and that the families of the two already martyred will receive comfort from the Lord's Holy Spirit."

Bobby Welch, SBC strategist for global evangelical relations,

concurred. "No one knows all of the details yet concerning this hostage-taking nor legitimate and earnest efforts that might be underway for their safe release," Welch said in an email. "In spite of the lack of such facts, the Southern Baptist Convention and the larger Christian evangelical world — as well as any and all other people of faith — cannot and must not silently and inactively sit by and watch such horrifying acts against persons of faith, especially when it is reported that these people are on missions of goodwill, help and humanitarian causes."

"Too many have, for too long, said too little in times like these," Welch continued. "That needs to change right here and right now."

He acknowledged the international issues and potential ramifications related to involvement with the crisis, but said he believes Christians must respond.

"We must not act as if this is only a passing, unfortunate accident of some sort," Welch wrote. "All people of faith have the burden to stand with and for all of our Korean friends, brothers and sisters."

"This is especially true for the families of those so horribly murdered, as well as those still held hostage," Welch continued. "We must deeply and earnestly pray with and for them, and for God Almighty's divine intervention. We must also register our over-

whelming outrage against such horrible acts of abuse, persecution and murder. Such expressions from us all cannot come too soon nor too loudly."

Page also expressed indignation. "I am outraged that wonderful people such as this would be used for political purposes by the Taliban," the SBC president said. "Once again, I call upon God's people to pray for their release. I also call upon all governments to do what they can to encourage the release of these dear people."

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation was reporting at press time that South Korean officials had talked over the weekend with at least one and perhaps three of the aid workers. It was the first direct contact South Korean officials have had with the workers since they were kidnapped off the bus they were riding on July 20, the CBC reported, adding that the officials were unwilling to say more because of the risk to the hostages.

Afghan doctors delivered medicine on Monday to the 18 women and three men being held hostage, the CBC reported.

"I know our Korean people are very earnest in missions, very strong in mission-mindedness, and not much concerned about safety," Park said. "God will take care of them" is a foundational belief," he added.

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Adult stem cell successes touted at press conference

WASHINGTON (BP) — Promising results using adult stem cells in patients demonstrate that such research, and not destructive embryonic experiments, should receive priority in funding, promoters of the non-controversial work say.

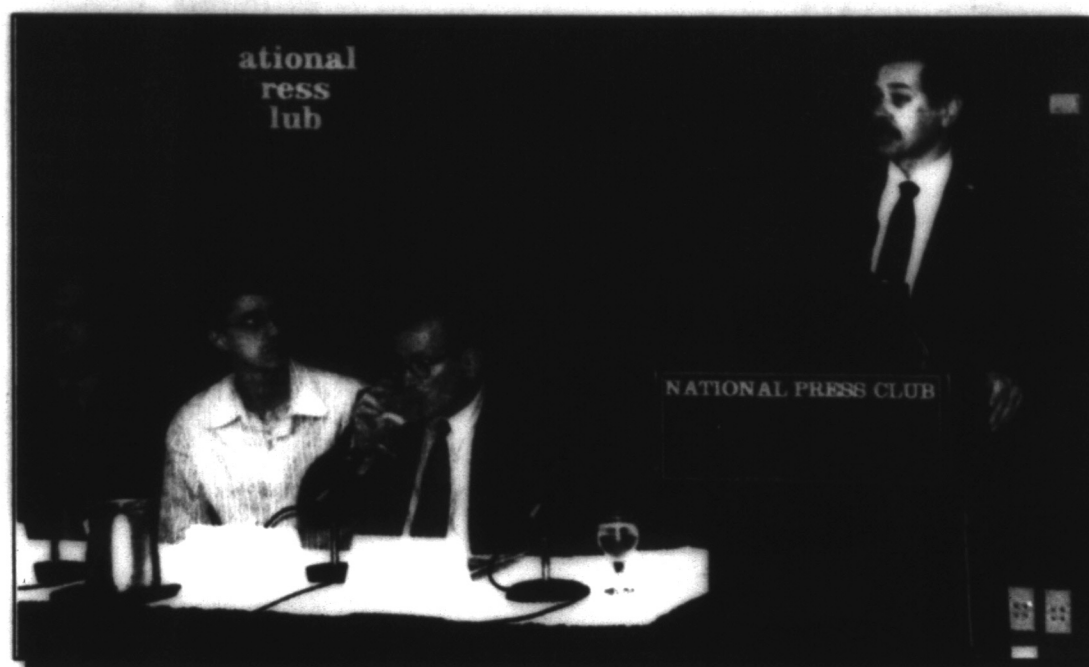
Patients, researchers and a bioethics specialist joined in a news conference in Washington to testify to the effectiveness of adult and other non-embryonic stem cell research. Their promotion of such experiments came the same day two members of the House of Representatives announced the introduction of legislation to give priority to adult stem cell research.

Reps. Dan Lipinski, D-Ill., and Randy Forbes, R-Va., introduced the Patients First Act, H.R. 2807.

Embryonic stem cells are considered "pluripotent," meaning they can develop into all of the different cell types in the body. Research using embryonic stem cells is opposed by most pro-life advocates, because extracting such cells results in the destruction of an embryo. In addition, embryonic stem cell research (ESCR) has yet to treat any diseases in human beings and has been plagued by the development of tumors in lab animals.

Adult stem cells, also referred to as non-embryonic stem cells, typically have been regarded as "multipotent," meaning they can form many, though not all, of the body's cell types. In recent years, however, research has shown some adult cells have the same flexibility as embryonic cells. Extracting such cells does not harm the donor either.

"Even the scientific community unfortunately has tended to ignore the potential of adult stem cells, especially in relation to patients," said David Prentice, senior fellow for life sciences at the Family Research Council, in the July 26 news conference.



STEM CELL CAMPAIGN — David Prentice (at podium) of the Family Research Council calls for support of adult stem cell research in a news conference at Washington's National Press Club. Other panelists (from left) were Amit Patel, a specialist in adult cardiac stem cell research; Jaider Abbud, whose juvenile diabetes has been successfully treated by adult stem cells, and Julio Voltarelli, whose research aided Abbud. (BP photo courtesy of the Family Research Council)

"There are at least two dozen examples of adult stem cells showing this flexibility but without some of the problems associated with embryonic type stem cells, problems with tumor genesis or getting the right type of cell for treatment," Prentice told reporters. "There are now thousands of patients whose health has improved, maybe not in all cases a cure, although in some it is. The bottom line is: If we're considering patients first, it's the adult stem cells that are really the most promising."

Pluripotent stem cells have been found in amniotic fluid, placenta, umbilical cord blood, nasal tissue and bone marrow, among other sources, Prentice said.

Research using non-embryonic stem cells has produced treatments for at least 73 ailments, according to Do No Harm, a coalition promoting ethics in research.

Stephen Sprague, 58, of New York said at the news conference he was privileged to be "one of the very early, early examples of the power of adult stem cells in cord blood."

He was diagnosed with leukemia 12 years ago, but no bone marrow match was found, apparently dooming him to an early death. Instead, he has been cured for 10 years as a result of a treatment using stem cells from cord blood.

"Ten years ago, nobody ever thought this would work on an adult, particularly a full-sized adult," Sprague told reporters. "There is some mother and her now-10-year-old daughter walking the streets of New York who did what mothers didn't do 10 years ago, and she donated her daughter's cord blood to a public cord blood bank. They will never, ever know what they have done for me and for my family."

Others speaking at the news conference:

- Jaider Abbud, a Brazilian dental surgeon diagnosed with juvenile diabetes last year at the age of 26. He received an infusion of his own stem cells in a trial last year and is no longer taking insulin.

- Doug Rice, 61, who had congestive heart failure and was told in November 2005 he had three or four months to live without a mechanical heart. The resident of Washington state has improved dramatically since receiving an injection of stem cells from his blood in a January 2006 procedure in Thailand.

- Julio Voltarelli, a Brazilian researcher whose clinical trial using stem cells from blood resulted in 13 of 15 Type 1 diabetes patients being free of insulin use.

- Amit Patel, a Pittsburgh, Pa., cardiothoracic surgeon and adult cardiac stem cell researcher whose treatments with stem cells from bone marrow have resulted in patients "still doing well" four years later.

Scattered Yadavs of India hearing Good News of Jesus Christ

NEW DELHI (BP) — As Hindu neighbors outside celebrated the birthday of the Hindu god Ram with haphazard gunshots into the air and a show of swordplay in the streets, joyful greetings of "Jai Masih" ("victory to the Messiah") rang out freely inside.

Those inside the meeting place had every reason to celebrate. For the first time, the three-day conference had united 70 believers from among India's Yadav people group; most had traveled great distances, some as many as 10-15 hours by train, to take part.

Numbering about 54 million throughout India, Nepal and Bangladesh, the Yadavs are one of India's largest people groups. Also known as the Ahir people, they originated as an occupational caste and speak four major languages, conference planner Elvin Trueb (not his real name) explained.

The Yadav people primarily serve as dairy workers and cattle farmers. Trueb believes they are the ideal group to reach their areas for Christ, not only because of their numbers but also because, as dairy providers, they are able to interact with every caste and people group.

Because the Yadav Christian believers live so far apart from one another, many did not know their Yadav brothers and sisters in Christ, even those from their own regions. Nevertheless, the gathering seemed more like a family reunion than an assembly of strangers. The Yadavs quickly united in purpose and mind through Christ their Savior.



REST STOP — A couple of milkmen among the Yadav people of southern Asia take a break after finishing their morning milk deliveries. A fledgling movement of Yadav believers in Christ is aiming to carry the Gospel to this largely unreached people group. (BP photo)

"There is no caste system. We are one in Christ and we must win everybody," said Naresh (not his real name), an elder in the group.

The purpose of the Yadav believers' conference was to cast a vision for Gospel saturation and rapid multiplication of churches, beginning among the Yadav people and then spreading throughout the rest of their spheres of influence. Trueb said he was very

optimistic after seeing the Yadavs' readiness to share their faith.

"Many Yadav people are dying and going to hell without knowing Christ," said Lochann (not his real name), one of the youngest Yadavs at the conference. "Yadav brothers have to take this responsibility to tell Yadav people the Gospel. We have to decide not to work for ourselves, but to work for others, so that many can go to heaven."

Bringing the scattered Yadav believers together gave them opportunities to learn, build a prayer network and encourage one another. Many of the Yadav believers have had a desire to reach out to other Yadavs, but until now they simply did not have the vision or the training for how to do so, Trueb said.

"This conference is an attempt to impart both of these missing elements to empower the Yadavs to go out and reach their own families, neighbors and all of the [region in which they live]," Trueb said.

In the past, lack of literacy prevented many from sharing the Bible, but the conference focused on witnessing and teaching through oral means, such as telling one's own testimony as well as stories from the Bible in ways that are both accurate and memorable.

"Pastor Trueb told his personal story and biblical stories in this way, so even an illiterate person can understand," said Yadav believer Vikram (not his real name). "The reason that God has given us this opportunity to learn is so that our people can be reached for Jesus."

Brijesh (not his real name), a Yadav believer, was excited about the prospect of being able to share with nonreaders.

"I am not literate," he said. "I do not know how to read and write, but I believe that even though I don't know how to read and write that God has chosen me. God has told me to go and preach the Good News."

JUST FOR THE RECORD



1. Youth Yard Sale, First Church, Charleston



2. Youth Mission Trip, First Church, Richton



3. Relay for Life Participants, Summerland Church, Taylorsville



4. Pastor Ordination, Line Creek Church, Morton

1. The youth of First Church, Charleston, hosted a yard sale with the proceeds going to Operation Go Mexico, a mission trip the church is taking in September. Shown are youth Sarah Joy Price and Brittany Harnes.

2. The youth of First Church, Richton, went on a mission trip to Pascagoula June 18-24 to assist Eastlawn Church with restoration of their sanctuary after Katrina. The students sanded, cut back trees and brush, painted, moved furniture, scraped, slept on the floor, cooked and cleaned, and led three services. Shown are the participants.

3. Members of Summerland Church, Taylorsville, participated in the Smith County Relay for Life. Shown are the participants.

4. Line Creek Church, Morton, ordained their pastor Tal Vardaman to the ministry July 15. Shown are Marty Wilson, Scott Walters, Julius Thompson, Vardaman, Kent Pickett, and Dusty Rhodes.

5. Silver Creek Church, Pike Association, ordained Richard Fortenberry to the ministry June 24. Shown are pastor Jimmy Smith, Fortenberry, and Paige Fortenberry.

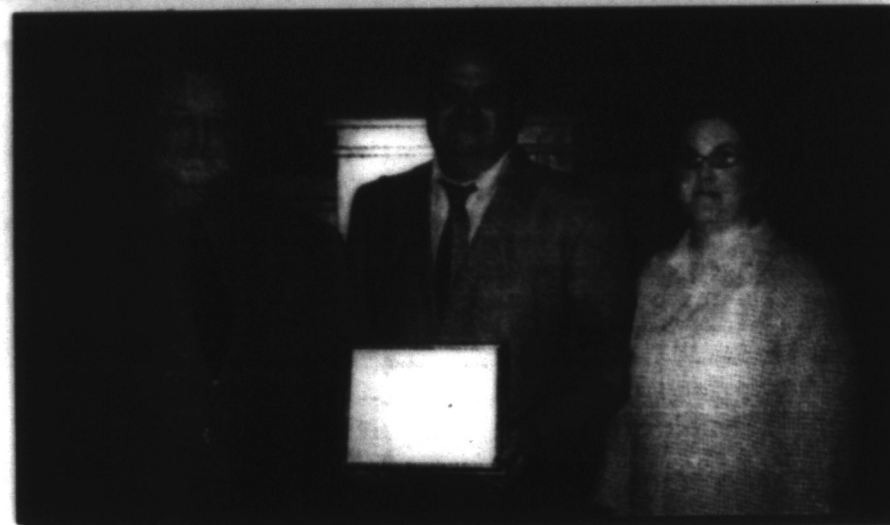
6. Branch Church, Morton, held a ground breaking ceremony for their new fellowship hall July 15. Shown are Tat Simpson, Butch Myatt, Faye Myatt, Ann Madison, Timothy Phillipson, Barbara Gordon, Dalton Tagert, and Dwight Irby.

7. Westside Church, Hazlehurst, placed 50 crosses in front of the church representing 50 million babies whose lives were ended by abortion. Shown are some of the members, along with pennies being collected for the Memorial to the Missing in Jackson.

8. The Children on Mission of Siloam Church, Meadville, collected over \$200 in pennies for the Memorial for the Missing in Jackson. Shown are the participants along with leaders Dudley and Carmen Wilkinson.

9. Cedar View Church, Olive Branch, is hosting a community singing Aug. 18 featuring The Bluff City Quartet at 6 p.m.

10. Old Hebron Church, New Hebron, is hosting the Kingsmen Quartet Aug. 19, 6 p.m. Tommy Tanner, pastor.



5. Ordination, Silver Creek Church, Pike Association



6. Groundbreaking, Branch Church, Morton



7. Crosses displayed, Westside Church, Hazlehurst



8. Children on Mission, Siloam Church, Meadville